



CARLOS A. GIMENEZ

MAYOR
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

Fellow residents of Miami-Dade County:

Each year, by County Charter, it is my responsibility as your mayor to deliver my budget address to the residents of Miami-Dade County and to explain my funding priorities. My priority to provide efficient and effective government service in a financially responsible and transparent manner has not changed. I believe that Miami-Dade County should provide the services our community values in a way that you — our taxpayers — think is fair. That is why Miami-Dade County must continue to adhere to our guiding governing principle of fiscal sustainability.

We are a global, diverse community of 2.6 million — the most-populous County in Florida. Our residents settle here from everywhere on the globe and our businesses have strong international ties. Subsequently, our local economy is sensitive to changes elsewhere. The most recent updates to world economic forecasts include a reduction in anticipated growth due to political uncertainty, lower oil prices and greater risk aversion around the world. So while our local economy has been thriving as the dollar became stronger, the flow of money into South Florida from Europe and Latin America will probably slow down.

Although we are not forecasting a recession in Miami-Dade, County we need to remain realistic about our near- term economic outlook. If foreign economies continue to struggle, sectors like international tourism, commercial real estate and banking could be the most impacted. Sales of single-family homes, domestic trade and logistics, and the local healthcare industry are all predicting moderate growth, which represents a slowing of the robust growth we have experienced recently. Miami-Dade County and our partners at The Beacon Council will continue to work hard to attract industries that will help us establish a core middle class and boost our local economy for our long-term resiliency.

As was the case when I first took office during some of the most challenging fiscal times in Miami-Dade County's history, I will continue to prioritize public safety, transportation, affordable and workforce housing, and neighborhood services. Government spending, however, must be conservative and we must continue to take into account that growth can be fleeting.

Without question, the single most important service that local government provides is public safety. After a number of years of limited resources, Miami-Dade County will hire 125 new police officers, 264 correctional officers and additional firefighters. The County will ensure that all public safety officers are properly trained and have access to the most up-to-date technology so they can improve their interaction with our residents and better protect our community. And we must continue to invest in services for our children to break the cycle of violence that is plaguing parts of our community.

It is also time for Miami-Dade County to prioritize transportation. As part of the Fiscal Year 2016-17 budget development process, my administration is further refining local revenue estimates in order to address congestion issues immediately. We have already started to make our public transportation system cleaner, safer, more attractive and accessible, and we continue to do what we can to improve traffic flow. We will also be positioned to fund longer-term development as other potential sources of support are confirmed, including federal and state grants, contributions from other local governments and private-sector partnerships, as well as new technologies that may make current options obsolete.

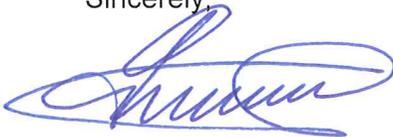
In Fiscal Year 2016-17, I am optimistic that construction of Liberty Square will be in full force. Miami-Dade County has committed \$74 million to its revitalization, known as "Liberty City Rising," which will be used to leverage up to three times that amount in private sector sources. This project is projected to generate approximately \$285 million in economic activity over the duration of the project and create an estimated 2,290 jobs. Miami-Dade County will continue to pursue other opportunities for both affordable and workforce housing so that we can establish a firm economic foundation and high quality of life for all our residents.

As your mayor, I will continue to support enhanced services without increasing overall tax rates. Through the Fiscal Year 2016-17 budget development process, funding for enhanced green space maintenance, and the current programming levels at parks and other facilities will be continued. The new Animal Services' Shelter will be operational and resources will be provided to support its expanded services. Libraries will continue to operate at current levels, which were enhanced in last year's budget, and funding for elderly, veterans and children's services will continue. Grant funding for the community-based organizations receiving awards through the new competitive process will also be included.

Our Miami-Dade County government workforce is valuable and merits recognition for its hard work and dedication to public service. We have successfully negotiated collective bargaining agreements with five of our unions. Should property tax roll growth reach targets established in these three-year agreements, approximately 16,000 employees represented by those unions will share in a portion of that growth through the first cost-of-living increase in more than seven years.

My fellow residents, you have chosen to make Miami-Dade County your home because you want to live in a safe community where the streets and water are clean; where your children have parks to play in; where there are vibrant commercial areas and outstanding cultural venues; and where the less fortunate are cared for. You want to live near beautiful beaches and other recreational venues. You want to live in a place where there are job opportunities and healthcare options. You want to live here in Miami-Dade County, and the Fiscal Year 2016-17 budget will help make this the place you want to continue to live in, work and raise a family.

Sincerely,



Carlos A. Gimenez
Mayor